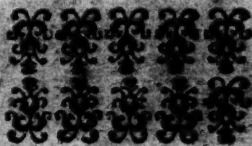


4
The Beasts in Power,
O R
Robin's Song:
W I T H
An Old Cat's Prophecy.

Taken out of an Old Copy of Verses,
suppos'd to be writ by John Lidgate,
a Monk of Bury.



L O N D O N, Printed in the Year 1709.



The Preface.

AT a Bookseller's, where I was buying some Books, I met with a very old Collection of English Verses, which I thought very curious; and asking the Price, he smil'd, and told me I should have it very cheap: for, to deal fairly by me, he had offer'd it to a certain eminent Person, who understands Books, and is known to add daily to his Library, who not only reject'd it, but assur'd him 'twas worth nothing, and would never bring him in Sixpence. I had so much deference for the Judgment of that Person, that I began to distrust my own, and had thrown it by, but that I reflect'd he might possibly be prejudic'd by an Aversion I knew he had to the Plainness and Simplicity of the old English Language. Besides, seeing at the same Shop nine Editions of Tom Thumb, De Foe's Works, Jack Hall's Life, and the New Art of Cookery, bespoke by him, and finely bound; I concluded our Tasts were far different, and went on with my Purchase: which I was abundantly satisfy'd with. Finding no Title-Page, I can give no account when it was printed, or by whom most of them were writ; only finding two Copys intire at the beginning, writ in praise of John Lidgate, I make no doubt but

many of them are his ; and particularly this which I have publish'd, and as well as I could, without altering the Sense, put into modern English ; wishing it had fallen into a better Hand. There follows a long Explanation ; but that is so torn and spoil'd, that it will require some time to put it together ; and (besides that) I hope to get a better Hand to publish the Whole. I think what the Author himself says, in the beginning of the Explanation—(viz. That this is plain enough not to need any) he has reason for ; since I think it impossible for any one to mistake his Meaning in this Fable, which is to represent the danger of Young Persons being suffer'd to indulge their Passions ; which tho ever so innocent, and seeming of no consequence in their Childhood, yet growing up with them, may perplex their whole Lives, and have an ill influence on all that have to do with them, and grow at last too strong for themselves, when they see their error, to be able to subdue. That by the Beasts are meant the Passions ; and that all that follows is a Representation of the Consequences of their prevailing over Reason, assisted by Flatterers, and oppos'd by true Friends in the Person of a Lady (because that Sex is most subject to be guided by them) as well as that strong and violent Passions, if not put a stop to, must end in the Ruin of those that are led by them : As it is the true Meaning of the Author (this being the Sum of his Explanation) so it carries a Moral of universal Use.

Farewell.

Robin



Robin Red-breast, *with the Beasts.*



NE that had in her Infant State,
While playing at her Father's Gate,
Seen, and was most hugely smitten
With young Dog and dirty Kitten,
Had took 'em up, and lug'd 'em in,
And made the Servants wash 'em clean.

When She to a fit Age was grown,
To be sole Mistress of her own,
Then to her Favour, and strange Trust,
She rais'd these two ; in rank the first
The Dog : who with guilt Collar grac'd,
Strutted about. The Cat was plac'd
O'er all the House to domineer,
And kept each Wight of her in fear ;
While he o'er all the Plains had pow'r,
That savage Wolves might not devour
Her Flocks. She gave him charge, great care
To take : But Beasts uncertain are.

Now see by these what Troubles rise
To those who in their Choice unwise
Put Trust in such ; for he soon join'd
With Beasts of Prey, the Dog combin'd,
Who kill'd the Sheep, and tore the Hind :
While he would stand, and grin, and bark,
Concealing thus his Dealings dark.
A Wolf, or so, sometimes he'd take,
And then, O what a noise he'd make !
But with wild Beasts o'er-run yet are
The Plains : Some die for want of Fare,
Or torn, or kill'd ; the Shepherds find
Each day are lost of ev'ry kind.

The

The silly Sheep lament in vain,
 Of their hard Fate, not him complain.
 The Shepherds, and the Servants all,
 Against the Traitor loudly bawl :
 But there was none that dar'd to tell
 Their Lady what to them befel ;
 For Puss, a Fox of wondrous Art
 Brought in to help, and take their part,
 By whose Assistance to deceive,
 She made her ev'ry Lye believe.

One lucky Day, when she was walking
 In her Woods, with Servants talking,
 And stop'd to hear how very well
 A Red-Breast sung, then him to dwell
 With her she call'd : He came, and took
 His place, next to a Fav'rite Rook.

Where Robin soon began to sing
 Such Songs as made the House to ring ;
 He sung the Loss and Death of Sheep,
 In Notes that made the Lady weep :
 How for his Charge the Dog unfit,
 Took part with Foes, and Shepherds bit ;
 Ev'n from his Birth he did him trace,
 And shew him Cur of shabby Race ;
 The first by wandring Beggars fed,
 His Sire advanc'd, turn'd Spit for Bread ;
 Himself each Trust had still abus'd ;
 To steal what he should guard, was us'd
 From Puppy : Known where e'er he came,
 Both vile, and base, and void of Shame.

The Cat he sung, that none could match
 For venom'd Spite, or cruel Scratch ;
 That from a Witch transform'd she came,
 Who kitten'd three of equal fame :
 This first, one dead, of tabby Fur
 The third survives, much noise of her
 Had been : A Cat well known, with ease
 On Errands dark, o'er Land and Seas,
 She'd Journeys take to Cub of Bear,
 From these intriguing Beasts, who swear
 They'l bring him to defend the Wrong
 That they have done. Again he sung,

How

How Tabby once, in moon-light Night,
 Trotted with Letter Fox did write;
 In which he sends his best Respects
 To the She-Bear, and thus directs:
 " Madam, said he, your Cub safe send,
 " None shall his Worship soon offend;
 " It's all I can at present do
 " To serve him, as his Friends well know.

At this the Beasts grew in such rage,
 That none their Fury could assuage;
 Nay, Puss her Lady would have scratch'd,
 And tore her Eyes, but she was watch'd;
 For she'd set up her Back, and mew,
 And thrice ev'n in her Face she flew.
 The Dog, like an ungrateful Spark,
 At her would dare to snarl and bark.
 Her Tenants wondring stood, to hear
 That she their Insolence would bear;
 And offer'd their Assistance to
 Soon make them better Manners know;
 But she t'avoid all farther Rout,
 Her Window opening, turn'd Bob out;
 Hoping that then her Beasts would live
 In Peace, and no Disturbance give.

Yet nothing She can do avails,
 Their Rage against her still prevails;
 Tho Puss was warn'd to fear their Fate
 In Lines (by old prophetick Cat,
 Writ before her Transformation,
 When she was in the Witch's Station)
 Foretelling thus: " When Beasts are grown
 " To certain Heights, before unknown
 " Of Human Race, some shall aloud
 " Inflame and arm a dreadful Croud,
 " Who in vast Numbers shall advance,
 " And to new Tunes shall make them dance:
 " When this begins, no longer hope,
 " For all remains is Axe and Rope.

But not deter'd by this, they dar'd,
 With some who of their Plunder shar'd
 T'affront their Lady, and conspire
 To many with her Mony hire,

Contemning

Contemning her, to pay undue
 Regards unto this Bestial Crew;
 Tho these resembled Human Shapes,
 They were indeed no more than Apes;
 Who some in House, and some in Wood,
 And others in high Boxes stood,
 That chatt'ring made such noise and stir,
 How all was due to Fox and Cur;
 Till by their false deluding way,
 She found her Flocks begin to stray,
 Still Robin does for Her his Care
 And Zeal express, on whom yet are
 His Thoughts all fix'd. On her he dreams
 Each night. Her Praises are his Themes
 In Songs all day. Now perch'd on Tree,
 Finding himself secure and free,
 He pertly shakes his little Wings,
 Sets up his Throat: Again he sings,
 That She had left no other way
 To save her Flocks, and end this Fray,
 But soon to her Assistance take
 One who could make these Monsters shake;
 A well-known Huntsman, who has Skill
 The fiercest Beasts to tame or kill:
 At her command he'd come, and he
 Would make her Great, and set them free:
 That should these Beasts some evil day
 Bring Cub into her Grounds, She may
 Depend that not her self they'll spare,
 Since to insult her now they dare:
 All She at best can hope for then,
 Is to be safe shut up in Den;
 Since by sure signs all these Ingrate
 Are known to bear her deadly Hate,

He ends his Song, and prays to Heaven,
 That She may have the Wisdom given,
 Before it be too late, to take
 Such Resolutions, as may make
 Her safe, and that these Beasts no more
 To ravage in the Plains have pow'r.

